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LARSON RESPONDS TO PROPOSED DEFENSE CUTS TO F-22 PROGRAM

Washington, DC – Today, the Defense Department announced their outline for the FY2010 defense budget, which included major cuts to programs like the F-22 fifth generation fighter plane. U.S. Congressman John B. Larson (CT-01), Chairman of the House Democratic Caucus, said:

“The defense budget that Secretary Robert Gates announced today offers some promising developments and reforms in defense acquisitions, but it also laid the groundwork for one change that I am extremely concerned about. The drastic cutback of the F-22 program would mean serious economic consequences and negatively impact national security for the entire nation. I will work with my colleagues to protect this program that is absolutely vital to Connecticut’s workforce.

“The F-22 is the only fifth generation air dominance fighter plane in use today. It represents a technical and tactical achievement for our military that will be particularly important to protect our homeland against the emerging threats. Ending this program will seriously limit our Air Force and leave us vulnerable in military conflicts that could arise. Keeping the technical know-how and manufacturing ability in Connecticut, and the 43 other states that help build this advanced aircraft, is incredibly important to our future national security.

“Maintaining a robust manufacturing base is also vital to our local and national economy as we see good jobs disappear and average Americans face tough times because of mistakes made by paper-pushers on Wall Street. Connecticut has always been a leader in high-tech manufacturing and we pride ourselves on being home to jobs where real Americans make real products that help our nation and advance our economy. The curtailment of the F-22 program could mean a loss of nearly 100,000 jobs across 44 states. Our nation cannot afford that kind of blow right now, not when we are experiencing such severe crises in other parts of our manufacturing sector like the auto industry. We must smooth the transition to the high-tech manufacturing

economy that will mean prosperity for this nation for generations to come, not deal our manufacturing industry another fatal blow.

□ “We have been through this before. The Pentagon makes a recommendation then Congress acts. We have won this fight before and we will win it again and keep these jobs in Connecticut.”

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